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Authors

Yang, Kevin

Kantamneni, Kavita

Kole, Lauren CS

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Article processing charges in dermatology journals: a bibliometric analysis

Kevin Yang, MD^{1a}, Kavita Kantamneni, MPH², Lauren CS Kole, MD¹

¹ Department of Dermatology, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, Alabama, United States, ² UAB Heersink School of Medicine, Birmingham, Alabama, United States

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To the Editor

Open access publishing has become an increasingly popular publication model across academia. Open access offers the advantage of enhanced visibility of research and publications to a broader audience. However, it can also be associated with high article processing charges (APC), which can create an inequitable barrier to those without funding. This creates a gap in knowledge and restricts publishing opportunities to those who can afford the corresponding fees.¹ Furthermore, inhibitory costs could prevent robust studies and unique findings from being published.^{1,2} In this analysis, we studied the characteristics associated with various publication models within dermatology journals.

Dermatology journals were identified via Clarivate's Journal Citation Reports from December 2023, yielding 70 journals with a listed impact factor in 2022 (Table 1). One journal was excluded owing to being a duplicate, and one journal was excluded because of a lack of sufficient information on the journal's website. Journals were classified into three categories: hybrid (45), open access (19), and subscription (4). Relevant characteristics for each journal were obtained from the respective website. Statistical analyses were conducted using the Kruskal-Wallis test and the chi-squared test in R.

On average, hybrid journals had significantly higher APCs than purely open access and subscription journals at a mean fee of \$3560.20 for hybrid journals compared to \$1638.23 for open access journals (Table 2). Hybrid journals had a higher average number of total citations and published more annual issues compared to open access journals. Otherwise, there was no association between publication models and social media presence or affiliation of the journal with a society. Although the impact factor did not have a statistically significant association with publication model, there was a positive correlation ($R=0.47$, $P<0.001$) between impact factor and APC (Figure 1).

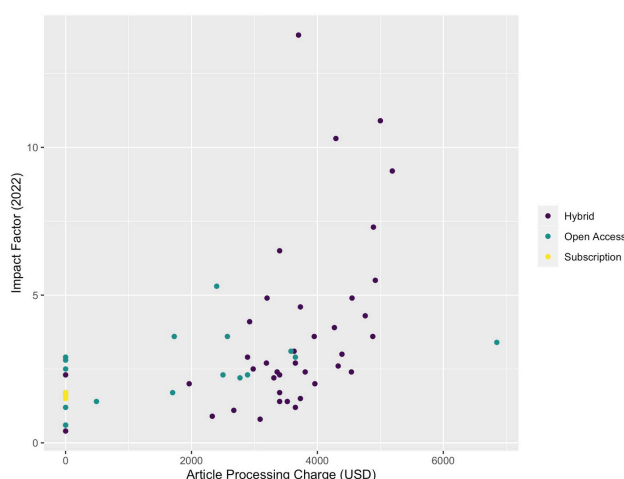


Figure 1. A plot of article processing charges with impact factor of the journal in 2022.

As more journals move toward open access publishing, understanding the impact of the changing landscape is critical. A major concern centers on a shift toward a pay-to-publish paradigm, potentially lowering the standard for accepted articles. Furthermore, it may serve to exacerbate disparities and limit research output, especially on a global level.³ The positive correlation between impact factor and APC further illustrates the risk of high-quality work being neglected. On the other hand, open access allows authors to reach a wide audience and removes paywalls that limit accessibility to scientific research.⁴ However, hybrid journals still tended to have higher citation counts, impact factors, and number of annual issues than open access journals, which may reflect why the hybrid model was associated with higher APCs. In the plastic surgery literature, similar trends have been identified.⁵

Limitations of this study include the cross-sectional nature of the analysis as well as exclusion of journals without an impact factor. This study elucidates the cur-

Table 1. *List of Journal Names and Publishers*

Publication Model	Journal Name	Publisher
Hybrid (n=45)	Advances in Skin & Wound Care	Wolters Kluwer
	Advances in Wound Care	Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.
	American Journal of Clinical Dermatology	Springer Nature
	American Journal of Dermatopathology	Wolters Kluwer
	Annales de Dermatologie et de Venereologie	Elsevier
	Archives of Dermatological Research	Springer Nature
	Australasian Journal of Dermatology	Wiley
	British Journal of Dermatology	Oxford University Press
	Burns	Elsevier
	Clinical and Experimental Dermatology	Oxford University Press
	Clinics in Dermatology	Elsevier
	Contact Dermatitis	Wiley
	Dermatitis	Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.
	Dermatologic Clinics	Elsevier
	Dermatologic Surgery	Wolters Kluwer
	Dermatologie	Springer Nature
	Dermatology	Karger
	European Journal of Dermatology	John Libbey Eurotext
	Experimental Dermatology	Wiley
	Giornale Italiano Di Dermatologia E Venereologia	Minerva Medica
	International Journal of Cosmetic Science	Wiley
	International Journal of Dermatology	Wiley
	International Journal of Lower Extremity Wounds	Sage
	JAMA Dermatology	American Medical Association
	Journal Der Deutschen Dermatologischen Gesellschaft	Wiley
	Journal of Burn Care & Research	Oxford University Press
	Journal of Cosmetic and Laser Therapy	Taylor & Francis
	Journal of Cosmetic Science	Tizra
	Journal of Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery	Sage
	Journal of Cutaneous Pathology	Wiley
	Journal of Dermatological Science	Elsevier
	Journal of Dermatology	Wiley
	Journal of Investigative Dermatology	Elsevier
	Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology	Elsevier
	Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology	Wiley
	Journal of Tissue Viability	Elsevier
	Lasers in Surgery and Medicine	Wiley
	Melanoma Research	Wolters Kluwer
	Mycoses	Wiley
	Pediatric Dermatology	Wiley
	Photodermatology, Photoimmunology & Photomedicine	Wiley
	Pigment Cell & Melanoma Research	Wiley

Publication Model	Journal Name	Publisher
Open Access (n=19)	Skin Pharmacology and Physiology	Karger
	Veterinary Dermatology	Wiley
	Wound Repair and Regeneration	Wiley
	Acta Dermato-Venereologica	Medical Journals Sweden AB
	Acta Dermatovenerologica Croatica	Hrcak
	Advances in Dermatology and Allergology	Termedia
	Anais Brasileiros de Dermatologica	Elsevier
	Annals of Dermatology	Korean Dermatological Association
	Burns & Trauma	Oxford University Press
	Clinical Cosmetic and Investigational Dermatology	Dove Medical Press
	Dermatologic Therapy	Wiley and Hindawi
	Dermatologica Sinica	Wolters Kluwer
	Dermatology and Therapy	Springer Nature
	Dermatology Practical & Conceptual	Mattioli 1885
	Indian Journal of Dermatology	Wolters Kluwer
	Indian Journal of Dermatology, Venereology & Leprology	Scientific Scholar
	International Wound Journal	Wiley
	Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology	Wiley
	Journal of Dermatological Treatment	Taylor & Francis
Subscription (n=4)	Leprosy Review	Lepra
	Skin Research and Technology	Wiley
	Wound Management & Prevention	HMP Global
	Cutis	Frontline Medical Communications
	Journal of Drugs in Dermatology	SanovaWorks
	Journal of Wound Care	Mark Allen Group
	Wounds	HMP Global

rent state of publishing models within dermatology, but more studies are needed to assess the impact of open access on the quality and integrity of dermatological publishing.

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Potential conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Table 2. Association of Journal Characteristics With Publication Model

Journal Characteristics	Hybrid (n=45)	Open Access (n=19)	Subscription (n=4)	P value
Article Processing Charge, mean	\$3560.20	\$1638.23	\$0	0.0002 ¹
Total Citations, mean	6805.7	2621.5	2754.0	0.009 ¹
Impact Factor (2022), mean	3.6	2.4	1.7	0.062 ¹
Annual Issues, mean	8.58	5.21	12.0	0.0003 ¹
Society Affiliation, n (%)	34 (73.9)	9 (47.4)	2 (50.0)	0.11 ²
Social Media, n (%)	23 (51.1)	12 (63.2)	4 (100.0)	0.14 ²

¹P value calculated via Kruskal-Wallis test²P value calculated via chi-squared test

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